

HORROR HOST MR. LOBO

Q&A WITH 'CINEMA INSOMNIA'S' CREATOR

By Paul Dale Roberts, Halo Paranormal Investigations



I recently had a chance to interview innovative producer and host Mr. Lobo, who has presided over the nationally syndicated late-night TV show *Cinema Insomnia* since 2001.

He has appeared in many independent genre films, including in the role of Criswell in the long-awaited remake of *Plan 9 From Outer Space*, called *Plan 9, American Scary*, *Citizen Wood*, and *Virginia Creepers*. His distinctive voice can be heard on commercials and trailers, including the *Hardware Wars* 30th Anniversary marketing campaign and the Grindhouse-style trailers of the anthology film *Midnight Show*. Mr. Lobo has a spoken word album available on CD and Download/MP3 called *Horrible Noises of Mr. Lobo's Very Bad Manor*, which was ranked by iTunes as one of the Top 40 Halloween recordings.

Read on to find out more about Mr. Lobo's horror and sci-fi inspirations, his underground comic creations, and his own paranormal experiences!

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Q: What was your inspiration to create underground comics?

Mr. Lobo: I always loved comics. Even though I am best known as a TV horror host, actor, and producer, I love print and am a lifelong cartoonist. Making movies and animations is very expensive and time-consuming, and print was very immediate and you can control all the aspects of it. You could tell your story you want to tell with no compromises — other than the limits of your talent or imagination.

I loved *Mad Magazine*, *Crazy*, and *Cracked* magazine as a kid, and underground comics allowed me to be even more subversive and far-reaching with my humor. I was inspired by the *Book of the SubGenius*, *Raw* magazine, *Psychotronic Catalog*, *Trencher*, *Heavy Metal Magazine*, *Cult Movies Magazine* ... you felt like you were getting something unfiltered. You can't have a revolution without print!

I took some of my movie scripts and stories and put out several books in the '90s — the height of zine mania! First there was a Mad Max-like, post-apocalyptic parody magazine called *Nuke Nova: Adventures in the Rust Age*. Then we did several anthologies called *Funny Pages* with other artists. I still do comics occasionally — I just was involved with a U.K. horror anthology comic called *Bizarre Dimensions* in which Mr. Lobo is sort of the "Crypt Keeper" for a collection of stories that are 1000% truer than real life.

Q: How long has Cinema Insomnia been around?

Mr. Lobo: Officially, since 2001 ... but it seems like an eternity! Seriously, in the cannon of the show, Mr. Lobo has done some throwback episodes from the 1960s and '70s. *Atonic Brain* and *Screaming Skull* are both retro episodes on Alpha Video DVD.

Q: Have you ever met Elvira? A crossover between you two would be epic.

Mr. Lobo: Elvira is a legend and one of the most successful horror movie hosts of all time! I am proud to say that Cassandra and I have known each other for years. She helped me out a few times in my career. She was gracious enough to let me interview her for our *Night of the Living Dead* episode and hands off a can of film to me.

We did a panel together at WonderCon in 2009. She later included me in a show she hosted with Bay Area horror host Peaches Christ, and the three of us hosted *Dead Alive* and *Creature From the Black Lagoon*! Two unforgettable nights. Backstage she gave me great advice ... like to always protect your core character. We email and chat once in a while still, but I haven't seen her in years.

Q: Since I am a paranormal investigator, I must ask you: Have you ever experienced anything paranormal?

Mr. Lobo: A few times. When I worked at the Crest Theatre, I heard heavy film cans topple down the stairs that suddenly were back in place at the projection booth. The "ghost light" that we set out traditionally on the stage at night to appease the forces that be ... exploded before our eyes, sending glass everywhere.



In "Cinema Insomnia," Mr. Lobo appears in brief vignettes in between segments of late night movies in this nationally syndicated television show.

When we filmed our *Haunted House Special* in Northern Virginia, the abandoned house had a history. An old woman who lived there had dementia and would wander into the fields. So, the neighbors locked her in and would check on her. The bedroom door had heavy locks on the outside, and you could see the claw marks on the inside from her fingernails. Sometimes you could hear the desperate clawing while we were filming.

We found props that we needed that just appeared inexplicably, including a board that was cut to the exact size we needed. We found trails of cut-out obituaries from the '50s that led to a scrapbook of them that no one could explain how it got there. My co-star, John, vowed never to return there. They have since torn the place down.

Things happen in our own home as well. It's like 200 years old ... voices and sounds and doors slamming and lights on and off. I think it's echoes from the past intruding on present time. I don't think we really understand time, space, and dimensions and how they interplay with each other. Our reality may be more of a liquid than a solid. I think one day the science will come out and phenomena will be accepted like changes in weather patterns.

Q: What are your three top favorite horror movies?

Mr. Lobo: Ugh! This goes against my philosophy, because on any given day I could say something different. But I do have a special affection for movies I have hosted on Cinema Insomnia.

Plan 9 From Outer Space — it was a thrill to be cast in the remake! I love campy horror, and I am a saint in the Church of Ed Wood. *Night of the Living Dead* — it chilled and thrilled me as a kid to see Bob Wilkins host it on *Creature Features*, and it was a treat to host it as my first syndicated episode! *Brain That Wouldn't Die* — low budget, sleazy American Frankenstein story with “Lovecraftian” overtones. When I watch it, I am hypnotized, and it feels like its 3 in the morning. I like that feeling!

Q: What are your three top science-fiction movies?

Mr. Lobo: As a kid, I loved the *Star Wars* movies, but I am holding them exempt as they are really fantasy effects films and not sci-fi. I have hosted at Blobfest for many years, and I love *The Blob* — we reenact the scene where we run out of the theater to escape the molten monster.

I also love *Forbidden Planet*, which I have hosted live many times. *Robby the Robot* is the screen's most amazing mechanical man. And hosting the Future Noir event reminds me how much I love the artsy dystopia of *Blade Runner*.

Q: What are your three most favorite TV shows?

Mr. Lobo: I think the three shows that have affected my style the most on *Cinema Insomnia* are *The Twilight Zone*, *Monty Python's Flying Circus*, and the original *Creature Features* with Bob Wilkins.

Q: If you could hang out with a superhero, what superhero would you be hanging out with?

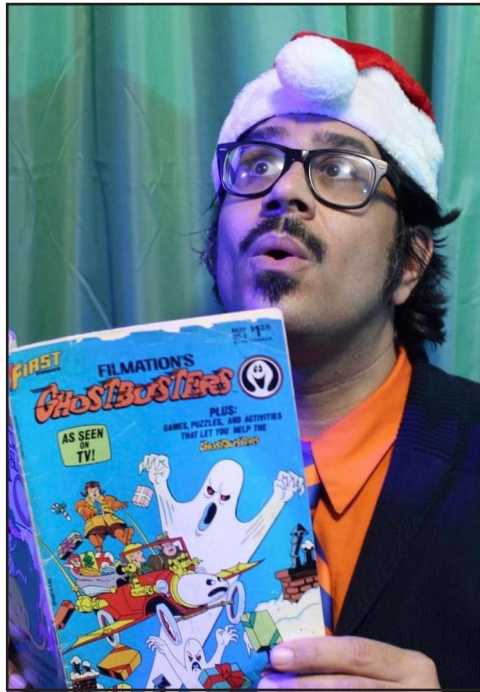
Mr. Lobo: Spiderman and Batman were favs as a kid. But I'd love to hang with The Phantom Stranger. Love that turtleneck and medallion! So groovy! Mod and mysterious! I'd love to play him in a movie. Casting directors are you listening?

Q: Do you have anything exciting to promote to your fans?

Mr. Lobo: So many things! We have 14 of our two-hour+ *Mr. Lobo Cinema Insomnia* episodes on Alpha Video that you can order on Amazon or Oldies.com. *Bob Wilkins Halloween Special*, *Night of the Living Dead*, *Carnival of Souls*, *Screaming Skull*, *Eegah!*, *Dick Tracy Meets Gruesome*, *Atomic Brain*, *Voyage to the Prehistoric Planet*, *Wasp Woman*, *Santa Claus Conquers the*

Martians, *House on Haunted Hill*, *Monster From a Prehistoric Planet*, *Teenagers From Space*, and *The Haunted House Special* all have new releases and matching posters.

Retailers can get them through MVD, or you can get them direct from me if you want them signed on eBay. We have 15 episodes on Amazon Prime U.K. and three episodes, including the *Bob Wilkins Halloween Special* on Amazon Prime in the U.S. Also, I have my own streaming channel OSI 74 for ROKU. We have Mr. Lobo Noddy Nogginz bobble head from Phoenix Comics and Toys! Two card games. We are crowdfunding for our 19th season of shows on Patreon, and I've started pre-production on a Mr. Lobo movie. Always more stuff happening! Maybe we'll even do another comic book!



Mr. Lobo has published many humor zine and underground comics.

Q: Any final words, before we close this interview?

Mr. Lobo: Movies, like any art form, can provide an escape and an opportunity to explore and reflect in the safety and comfort of our homes when the world seems to have gone mad. My Mentor Bob Wilkins used to say “Watch Horror Films — Keep America Strong” on *Creature Features*.

On *Cinema Insomnia*, I have my own catch phrase: “They’re Not Bad Movies — Just Misunderstood!” Mr. Lobo hopes to bump into all of you in the dark soon, and bring the popcorn!

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To learn more about Mr. Lobo, visit cinemainsomnia.com, osi74.com, twitter.com/MisterLobo, facebook.com/cinemainsomnia, and youtube.com/c/CinemaInsomnia. ♦